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CP Alive in the Fuqua Conservatory

By Don Schnell, Rt. 1, Box 145C, Pulaski, VA 24301, USA

CPN readers will recall our article in the September, 1988 issue describing the building of the Fuqua Conservatory in the Atlanta Botanical Garden, including a photo of work in progress (CPN 17:73-75). Well, they finished on time, and what a beauty it is.

Figure 1. Fuqua Conservatory from front. All photos by author.

In July, 1989, while botanizing in the south, Brenda and I stopped by to see the new Conservatory which had only been open for about three months. Knowing the Fuqua Conservatory Superintendent, Ron Detterman, and being supplied with updates from Lisa Frank of the Garden, we expected something excellent, but we were still taken back by what had been accomplished.

The Conservatory was built on a multi-habitat plan in which tropical, desert, temperate, etc. areas would be featured and climate-controlled using the most modern and least obtrusive devices. You have to really look for the mist nozzles and tubes. When they go off in the tropical section, they do not drench you as is the case in so many conservatories, but just fill the air with a very fine mist of humidity. The general design is quite attractive and inviting as one approaches the front door (Fig. 1). The tropical dome is most prominent, and off to the right (Fig. 2) are the extensive working (sometimes known as "prop") houses. On the far left corner of the Conservatory is a neat little cupola (Fig. 3), and there will be more about that later.

I could go on about all the fine plantings, but must restrict myself here to CP. One thing that we immediately noticed was that the Conservatory did not look like it had only been open for three months; it looked quite mature in that most of the plants were full size. It looked as though it had grown there awhile, but not to the point that plants were all pressing against the glass everywhere as in a conservatory sadly neglected in another large southern city.

In the lobby is kind of an electronic table of contents and index. This consists of two CRT screens. The smaller is a touch active computer screen listing a menu of short programs describing various areas, displays and plant groups (including CP, of course) in the conservatory. One simply makes a selection by touching it on the screen, and the program appears in color with music and narration on the larger screen. The magic of computers and video disc is at work here.

The paths lead one quite naturally through all of the Conservatory and are so constructed that one does not really have to worry about missing anything if he or she wants to take the full tour. CP are scattered in various suitable niches of the temperate and tropical habitats, and labeling and

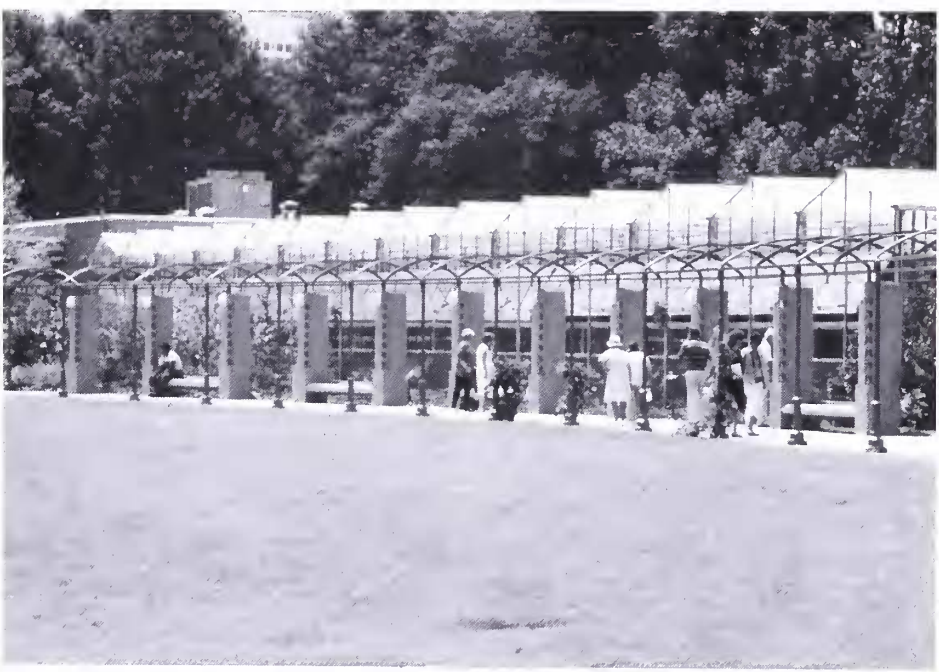


Figure 2. View of working greenhouse off to right.

Figure 3. Exterior of CP room cupola.

descriptive signs are excellent (Fig. 4-7). One simply does not read genus and species on a hastily scrawled tag, but in appropriate areas there are little transparent plastic signs describing what is unique about the plant or plants (Fig. 4).

Now, back to our mysterious little cupola. This is the CP room, in addition to the plantings elsewhere in the Conservatory. It is very well lit (two major US botanical gardens persist in hiding CP away in little displays in dark foyers between major rooms). Hanging about from the ceiling are many baskets of *Nepenthes* (Fig. 8), and in the center of the room is an **open** terrarium (Fig. 9) which must have 30-35 species of CP planted in it, nearly all genera represented, including *Heliamphora* in an open (yes, open!) display where one can get close.

It was in the CP room that we ran into Ron Detterman whom I had not seen for about ten years. Ron is not a behind-the-desk superintendent. He wears blue jeans and the standard Garden employee green T-shirt with the Garden monogram on it, and talks about getting down on his hands and knees and weeding.

From this point, Ron took us back to the growing houses, usually off limits to casual visitors. I always look for ways to get into the growing or prop houses of botanical gardens, saying as I do, "That's where the good stuff is!" This is not to detract from the public displays, particularly this superior one, but botanical gardens do tend to keep their more rare and newly acquired material in the security of the growing houses. In the growing house were several rolling tables covered up with CP, many cuttings and seedlings as well as full-grown and nearly full-grown plants. The new rolling bench system in greenhouses is nice since you do not waste space with an aisle you are not in at the moment; you roll a balanced table effortlessly against another and make the aisle you need at the moment.

After seeing what was going on in the growing houses, Ron led us out back outdoors again. The Conservatory area is nicely landscaped and includes tiers of grass, plantings, strategically placed and attractive stone and walkways, and several ponds. One of the ponds has native US CP

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

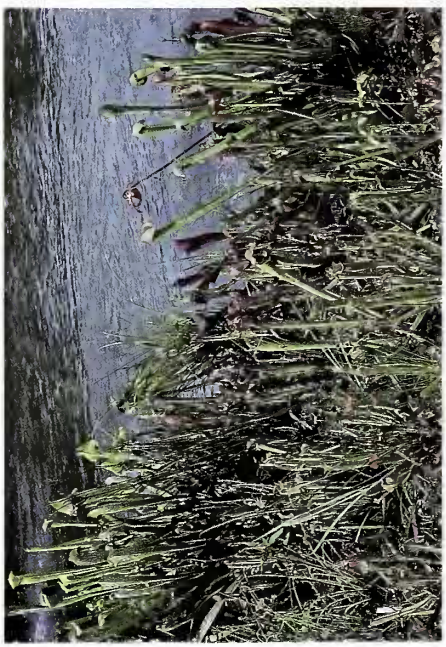
Figures 4-7. *Nepenthes* plantings out in main Conservatory.

Figures 6.

Figures 7.

Figure 8. Hanging *Nepenthes* baskets in CP room.

Figure 9. CP terrarium in CP room with two unknown people.



Figures 10-11. Exterior native US planting along edge of outdoor pond.

Figures 12 (upper) and 13 (lower). Ground-level CP with large *Dionaea* grown from seed

growing very exuberantly along an edge of it (Fig. 10-11). Again the plants are quite mature, including some especially large *Dionaea* (Fig. 12) raised originally from seed. The plants had mostly been crowded in Ron's own greenhouse until it was time to move in. The pond area had been planted the summer before while work on the Conservatory was still in progress and they had nicely survived the winter.

The growing medium along the edge of the pond is actually a fill of peat and local river sand in a portion of the pond with a structural band to hold up the shoreline. This places the water table only about 6-8 inches beneath the surface. During the winter, Ron protected more tender plants such as small butterworts, sundews and *Sarracenia psittacina* (Fig. 13) with a mulch covering of pine needles. Given the success so far with this outdoor planting, he plans to expand it into unused parts of the planting area of this pond which will nearly triple the CP planting. He weeds fairly frequently by cutting unwanted herbs off just below the surface. He feels that this is less disturbing than pulling weeds by the roots which come up with adherent growing medium and often smaller CP as well. The cutting technique is of course exactly what a farmer does with his cultivator, and most often the roots eventually die.

We bade Ron farewell and thanked him for taking a great deal of time showing us around and talking with us, and went off to look at "ordinary" plants elsewhere in the Garden. We will certainly be back.

In the eastern United States at least, this is undoubtedly the CP display and genestock for other gardens, including many older ones, to emulate. If you are passing near or through Atlanta, or can make a trip there specifically, by all means stop by and look this entire Garden over. The Atlanta Botanic Garden is in Piedmont Park on the Piedmont Avenue side; the Park is shown on all sidebar maps of Atlanta on southeastern or Georgia roadmaps and is easily accessible from either I-85 northeast, or I-75/I-85 passing through the city.

C.I.T.E.S. The Dream and the Reality

By "Mr. Smith," Australia

When I first heard the CITES regulations were coming in I wondered if they would prove a valuable conservation aid or just another lot of red tape. Unfortunately the case is the latter.

In Eastern Australia *Sarracenia* species and hybrids flourish and flower and set seed freely. Because of CITES regulations I cannot send *Sarracenia* seed to C.P.N.'s seed bank. Just how is this helping preserve them in their natural habitats?

Three *Sarracenia* species are on Appendix I, they being *S. oreophila*, *S. rubra* ssp. *jonesii* and *S. rubra* ssp. *alabamensis*. The latter two are given a rather artificial specific status for CITES purposes.

I received 3 small rhizomes of all 3 about 20 years ago in the case of *S. oreophila* and *S. rubra* ssp. *jonesii* and of *S. rubra* ssp. *alabamensis* about a year after its discovery. I received seed of the albino form of *S. rubra* ssp. *jonesii* a few months after its discovery.

All have flourished under my conditions and have been divided many times. Most of the divisions have been sold or given away within Australia with the result that within this country they are easier to obtain than some colour forms of *S. flava* and *S. purpurea* fma. *heterophylla*.

I have on at least 6 occasions sent plants of the three Appendix I Sarracenias to collectors in U.S.A. The most recent two times were after the CITES regulations were in and I used false names. Why I have had to do this is that by sending these plants I was discouraging the people they were going to from being tempted to try and illegally collect their own.

What has happened to reduce the Appendix I Sarracenias to an endangered situation?

(1) They originally had small habitats.

(2) Destruction of habitats through activities of man. – Agriculture, artificial lakes, draining of swamps, golf courses, etc.